

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 EB-08 CIAE-00
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PA-01 USIE-00 PM-05 DODE-00 /077 R

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 058630

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, EAID, LT

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIAL GOL ENVOY TO US

REF: (A) MASERU 557; (B) MASERU 559; (C) MASERU 558

I. SUMMARY: AF/S MET MARCH 3 WITH KONKA MOLAPO,
MFA DEPUTY PERMSEC WHOM REF (A) REPORTED GOL WAS
SENDING AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO CARRY GOL RESPONSE
TO US HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT FOR USE BY LESOTHO MISSIONS
HERE. MOLAPO APPEARED TO HAVE SERIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS
REGARDING LIKELY IMPACT OF REPORT ON AID LEVELS. ONCE
REASSURED ON THIS POINT, HE DROPPED ISSUE AND TURNED TO
REQUEST FOR US TO SPEED UP AID IN RESPONSE TO BORDER
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PROBLEMS WITH TRANSKEI (REF B). MOLAPO INDICATED HE
PLANNED TO REPORT TO PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN THAT GOL
HAD OVERESTIMATED US REACTION TO CRITICAL FINDINGS OF
REPORT AND THAT THERE APPEARS TO BE NO THREAT TO AID.
WHILE GOL IRE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT (AND ITS EFFECTS)
THUS APPEARS TO HAVE COOLED, IT MAY NOW BE NECESSARY TO
PROTECT LESOTHO FROM MAKING OPPOSITE ERROR OF UNDERESTIMA-

TING US SERIOUSNESS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIOR TO MOLAPO'S ARRIVAL, LESOTHO CHARGE HERE
TELEPHONED DEPARTMENT AND AID/W TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE

IN ADMITTING MOLAPO TO WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD WERE TO BE
SPECIAL HEARINGS IN CONGRESS MARCH 2 ON ISSUE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS IN LESOTHO (REF C). HEARINGS WERE IN
FACT ON TOPIC OF SECURITY SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE FOR
SOUTHERN AFRICA IN GENERAL AND ZAIRE. DEPARTMENT
STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT BOTH MOLAPO AND CHARGE
ATTEND IN ORDER TO GAIN INCREASED PERSPECTIVE ON
ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AID LEVELS AND US-GOL RELATIONS.
MOLAPO WAS ALSO PROVIDED WITH COPIES OF FINAL JOINT
REPORT BY SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES SO THAT HE
COULD COMPARE THE (RELATIVELY POSITIVE) REPORT ON
LESOTHO WITH OTHERS OF THE 104 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS
PREPARED ON COUNTRIES RECEIVING US AID. (COPY ALSO
BEING POUCHED FOR EMBASSY'S USE.)

3. FOLLOWING MEETINGS, MOLAPO TELEPHONED DEPARTMENT
TO EXPRESS MINGLED RELIEF AND SURPRISE THAT SUBJECT
OF LESOTHO HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD HAD HARDLY BEEN RAISED.
MOLAPO SAID HE HAD CONCLUDED THAT NO THREAT EXISTED
TO THE LEVELS OF US AID FOR LESOTHO AND WOULD REPORT
THIS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HE DECLINED AN OFFER TO
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SEEK APPOINTMENTS WITH SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL(S)
TO DISCUSS REPORT AND AGREED TO MEET WITH AF/S ON
FOLLOWING DAY (MARCH 3).

4. AT THAT MEETING MOLAPO WAS OFFERED CONCILIATORY
EXPLANATION OF US EFFORT TO PRESERVE ACCURACY AND
CREDIBILITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS WHILE AVOIDING
INHERENT TEMPTATION TO SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS OR CULTURAL
BIAS. HE WAS TOLD US BELIEVED CANDOR BETWEEN FRIENDLY
COUNTRIES ON UNAVOIDABLE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS
STRENGTHENED RATHER THAN WEAKENED THE BASIS FOR CONTINUED
ASSISTANCE AND WAS INVITED TO EXPLAIN GOL VIEWS ON
REPORT. MOLAPO IMPATIENTLY BRUSHED ASIDE THE SUBJECT
OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, STATING THAT HE HAD REVISED
HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEM (I.E. THE POTENTIAL
THREAT TO AID LEVELS) AS A RESULT OF HIS TRIP. HE
SEEMED PREOCCUPIED AND QUICKLY CHANGED THE SUBJECT TO
LESOTHO ROAD AND HIS REQUEST THAT ITS CONSTRUCTION BE
SPEEDED UP IN RESPONSE TO ATTEMPTS BY TRANSKEI TO
CLOSE BORDER TO NORMAL TRAFFIC.

5. PRESSED LATER IN THE CONVERSATION TO RETURN TO

SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, MOLAPO SAID THE GOL FELT THAT MANY COUNTRIES (INCLUDING ENGLAND) LACKED WRITTEN CONSTITUTIONS BUT RESPECTED HUMAN RIGHTS; THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REGRETTABLE EVENTS OF 1970 AND 1974 LAY SQUARELY WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS DETERMINED TO

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ELECTIONS TO UPSET STABILITY OF COUNTRY; AND THAT RETURN TO ELECTIONS WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL BECAUSE OPPOSITION WAS TOO SCATTERED AND FRAGMENTED TO HOLD MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE. HOWEVER, HE LISTED THESE POINTS IN A HURRIED, ALMOST PRO FORMA MANNER WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO PRES INDIVIDUAL POINTS, MAKE OTHERS REPORTED IN REF (C) OR ELABORATE ON GOL DISSATISFACTION WITH REPORT. HE DID NOT LEAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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COPY OF ANY WRITTEN RESPONSE, ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR MAKEKA HAD PREVIOUSLY DELIVERED A PAPER OFFERING A DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN LESOTHO GEARED TO REBUTTAL OF LAST YEAR'S US HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT.

6. OBVIOUSLY EAGER TO CHANGE SUBJECT, MOLAPO SAID THE TRANSKEI'S DECISION TO REQUIRE INTERNATIONAL PASSPORTS AND VISAS OF BASUTO (BUT NOT OTHERS) WISHING TO CROSS ITS TERRITORY HAD THE EFFECT OF CLOSING THE BORDER AND COULD LEAD TO SHORTAGES OF SUPPLIES IN SOUTHERN LESOTHO WITHIN WEEKS. HE REITERATED THE GOL'S REQUEST FOR US TO SPEED UP COMPLETION OF ROAD TO QACHA'S NEK. DEPARTMENT REPLIED THAT EXTRAORDINARY STEPS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO SHORTEN CONSTRUCTION TIME AND AID/W OFFICERS BEING SENT TO MARCH 20 PP MEETING ON THE ROAD IN MASERU WOULD CAREFULLY EXAMINE WHAT ELSE COULD FEASIBLY BE DONE.

7. COMMENT: OTHER THAN ZAIRE, WHICH HAD MORE EXTENSIVE GROUNDS FOR UNHAPPINESS, GOL WAS VIRTUALLY ALONE AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN LODGING VEHEMENT PROTEST AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. APPARENT CONCENTRATION OF BOTH AMBASSADOR MAKEKA AND SPECIAL ENVOY MOLAPO ON EFFECT OF REPORT ON AID RAISES QUESTION OF EXTENT TO WHICH GOL UNDERSTANDS LARGER CONCERNS OF US IN THIS AREA. DEPARTMENT CLEARLY HAS NO INTENTION OF USING CRITICAL FINDINGS OF REPORT AS EXCUSE TO CUT BACK ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, BUT A GOL CONCLUSION THAT CONGRESS IS NOT SERIOUS ABOUT ESTABLISHING A LINK BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID WOULD BE INCORRECT AND DANGEROUS TO FUTURE AID COOPERATION. WHILE APPRECIATING DIFFICULTY OF STRIKING PROPER BALANCE, DEPARTMENT HOPES EMBASSY WILL CONVEY TO GOL DURING DISCUSSIONS ON THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT THE DUAL POINTS THAT NO "PUNITIVE" APPROACH IS
CONTEMPLATED BUT THAT IT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY
IMPORTANT IN FUTURE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT AID RELATIONSHIP
RESTS ON SOUND BASIS OF PROGRESS IN RESPECT FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS. VANCE

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